

ART. XVI.—*Lectures on Natural and Difficult Parturition.* By EDWARD WILLIAM MURPHY, A. M., M. D.; Professor of Midwifery, University College, London; Obstetric Physician, University College Hospital; and formerly Assistant Physician to the Dublin Lying-in Hospital: 8vo, pp. 281. New York, S. S. & W. Wood, 1846.

THIS is a very excellent treatise on the practice of obstetrics, comprising a clear and accurate description of the pelvis; its measurements and those of the fœtal head; of the mechanism of labour; of the management of natural, difficult, and laborious labours; and of obstetric operations generally; with an appendix containing a summary, in the form of aphorisms, of the principles and rules laid down in the thirteen lectures, of which the volume is composed. The several subjects treated of are illustrated as far as practicable by a series of well executed wood cuts.

The style of the author is clear and well adapted to render his descriptions and practical directions easy of comprehension by the student, while the views he inculcates in regard to the mechanism, varieties and management of labour, whether natural or difficult, are in the main sound and calculated to lead to caution and skill in the practice of the obstetric art.

His two lectures on the mechanism of natural labour, are particularly excellent, and render this important subject, without a correct knowledge of which no one can ever become a safe or skillful obstetrician, perfectly plain. A careful perusal of these lectures, by any one who has made himself familiar with the structure, form, and dimensions of the female pelvis and fœtal head, cannot fail to communicate exact views of the several stages of labour, and of the relative position of the head in each, enabling the practitioner to judge accurately of the character of the labour in each case, and to detect readily any slight deviation of the head from the most favourable position, and when practicable to rectify it.

The directions laid down in these lectures on the management of natural labour, are likewise judicious. All that is necessary to be done to insure the comfort and safety of the mother, as well as the safe delivery of the child, is pointed out with sufficient minuteness, while every unnecessary interference is pointedly discountenanced.

The author's directions for the management of difficult and laborious cases are in the main equally sound. Caution and patience are strongly inculcated in every case, in which there is no positive evidence of the impossibility of delivery *per vias naturales* without manual or instrumental assistance, or in which delay does not place the life of the mother in imminent danger.

The whole of his remarks on the subject of the vectis and forceps, and the circumstances and period for their employment, are well worthy of a close study by all who are about to engage, as well as of those who have already engaged in obstetric practice; they may, perhaps, be considered by some, as calculated to lead to unnecessary timidity and delay in a resort to instruments. We apprehend, however, that the tendency to be feared is in the opposite extreme, and that the inculcation of great caution and reserve is less calculated to lead to unfortunate results, than allowing the student and young practitioner to suppose that the use of instruments is so far unattended with danger, that they may be resorted to in every case of difficulty, as well as to shorten the duration of a tedious labour. D. F. C.

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ART. XVII.—*Adulterations of various Substances used in Medicine and the Arts, with the Means of detecting them; intended as a Manual for the Physician, the Apothecary and the Artisan.* By LEWIS C. BECK, M. D., Professor of Chemistry in Rutgers' College, New Jersey, and in the Albany Medical College; Honorary Member of the Medical Society of the State of New York, &c. New York, 1846: pp. 333, 12mo.

THE object of this work, as stated by the author, is to point out the adulterations of numerous substances employed in medicine and the arts, and to indicate the

most ready and certain methods by which these frauds may be detected. A treatise of this kind has been much wanted in this country, both by the druggist and manufacturer, for heretofore, nothing has been published, as far as we are aware, with the exception of a reprint, some years since, of a popular work by Accum, principally devoted to the subject of adulterations of alimentary substances. It is true, much valuable information is to be found in the standard chemical and pharmaceutical publications of the day, and scattered through the various scientific journals, but this cannot be generally available from the labour and expense attendant on the search for it through numerous volumes, many of which are rare, and difficult of access.

Dr. Beck appears to have carefully collected all that is important, and has presented the information thus obtained from the best authorities, in a clear yet succinct form, so as to enable any one conversant with the general principles of chemistry, to apply it with advantage. The generality of the processes he points out, for the detection of adulterations, are extremely simple, and may be successfully employed by the merest tyro; in some cases, the plans indicated are more complex, and will require a fuller knowledge of chemical actions, on the part of the operator, but these are not numerous, whilst the directions given are extremely clear and definite. As the work is intended for general and popular use, the modes of investigation advised by the author, are calculated rather to point out the nature of the adulterations, and the probable extent of them, than to ascertain with absolute precision the composition of the substance submitted to examination; a task only to be undertaken by the experienced chemist.

The author has added much to the value of his treatise, by giving, in an appendix, full descriptions of the various chemical operations noticed in the body of the work, as well as directions for the preparation of such chemical tests as may be needed, with tables showing the changes and operation of certain re-agents on the more important substances. The work is, altogether, well suited for the purposes for which it was designed, and cannot fail to be extremely useful to all classes of the community, and we trust will act as a check to the knavery and cupidity of the many sophisticators, unfortunately so numerous both here and elsewhere. The baneful practice of adulterating the most important articles employed in medicine and the arts, is far too general, and consequently the most skillfully directed efforts of the physician, the artist or the manufacturer, are constantly rendered nugatory or even injurious from the imperfection and worthlessness of substances they have employed, and which have been passed upon them as genuine and efficient. The only mode of preventing this is, by the diffusion of such a knowledge among the community, as will enable every one readily to detect and expose the fraud, and this can best be accomplished by an extensive circulation of works like the present.

In conclusion, we would, however, remark that Dr. Beck has by no means occupied the whole ground; many substances are omitted by him or merely noticed in a cursory manner, which are of much importance in the arts, and are constantly offered for sale in an adulterated condition. These additions we hope that he will soon be enabled to make in a second edition of his work. R. E. G.

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ART. XVIII.—*Chemistry of the Four Seasons; Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter. An Essay, principally concerning Natural Phenomena, admitting of interpretation by Chemical Science, and illustrating passages of Scripture.* By THOMAS GRIFFITHS, Professor of Chemistry in the Medical College of St. Bartholomew's Hospital; Author of "Recreations in Chemistry and Chemistry of the Four Elements." Philadelphia, Lea & Blanchard, 1846: pp. 451, 12mo.

THIS is an exceedingly pleasant and instructive work, and although intended rather for the general than the scientific student, may be perused by every one with advantage. The author is well known as an able chemist and lecturer, as well as by the production of a popular treatise on the "*Chemistry of the Four Elements*," to which the present may be considered as a sequel. The object of the writer is to explain, in a popular but at the same time clear and perspicuous manner, some